Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior version, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1 (Currently Amended) A method for facilitating file access in a peer-to-peer network, the peer-to-peer network including ~~at least one server node, and~~ a plurality of client nodes, ~~wherein each of the client nodes allow users to publish and share files over the network, receive files over the network, and search for files to download,~~ wherein a portion of the nodes are separated from the network by a firewall device, the method comprising the steps of:

(a) designating a first client node that is not firewall protected to act as a proxy server;

(b) in response to determining that a second client node is protected by a firewall, instructing the second client node to establish a connection with the proxy server;

(c) sending an open connection request from the second client node to the proxy server;

(d) in response to receiving a request from a third client node for a file on the second client node, instructing the third client node to send the request to the proxy server; and

(e) forwarding the request from the proxy server to the second client node as a response to the open connection request, thereby allowing other client nodes to access files on the second client node despite the presence of the firewall.

2 (Currently Amended)The method of claim 1 further including step of:

      (f) sending a response from the second client node to the proxy server, and

      forwarding the response from the proxy server to the third client node,

      wherein the response includes the requested file.

3 (Currently Amended)The method of claim 2 wherein step (b) further includes the

steps of:

      (i)   allowing the second client node to report its IP address,

      (ii)   sending a probe message to the second client node,

      (iii)   observing what IP address the second client node is connecting

      from,

      (iv)   comparing the observed IP address with the reported IP address,

      and

      (v)   determining that the second client node is protected by the firewall

      when the IP addresses mismatch.

4 (Original) The method of claim 3 wherein step (b) further includes the step of:

      (i)   allowing the proxy server to report its IP address,

      (ii)   sending a probe message to the proxy server,

      (iii)   observing what IP address the proxy server is connecting from,

      (iv)   comparing the observed IP address with the reported IP address,

      and

      (v)   determining that the proxy server is not protected by a firewall

      when the IP addresses match.

5 (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein step (c) further includes the step of sending a message from the proxy server to a node registry that registers the second node using the IP address of the proxy server.

6 (Currently Amended) The method of claim 5 wherein step (d) further includes the step of in response to receiving a search request from the third client node for a file, returning a result to the third client node, wherein the result identifies a file name, the second client node, and the IP address of the proxy server.

7 (Currently Amended) The method of claim 6 wherein step (d) further includes the step of sending a request to the proxy server using the IP address of the proxy server, wherein the request includes a URL for the file on the second client node.

8 (Currently Amended) The method of claim 6 wherein step (d) further includes the steps of receiving the request by the proxy server, and determining if the request is intended for the proxy server or the second client node by examining the URL in the request.

9 (Currently Amended) The method of claim 6 wherein step (d) further includes the step of in a response to determining that the request is intended for the second client node, reformatting the request so that the second client node may respond to the request.

10 (Currently Amended) A peer-to-peer file delivery network including at least one server node, and a plurality of client nodes, wherein each of the client nodes allow users to publish and share files over the network, receive files over the network, and search for files to download, wherein a portion of the nodes are separated from the network by a firewall device, the network comprising the steps of:

means for designating a first client node that is not firewall protected to act as a proxy server;

means for instructing a second client node to establish a connection with the proxy server in response to determining that the second client node is protected by a firewall;

means for sending an open connection request from the second client node to the proxy server;

means for instructing a third client node to send a request to the proxy server in response to receiving the request from the third client node for a file on the second client node; and

means for forwarding the request from the proxy server to the second client node as a response to the open connection request, thereby allowing other nodes to access files on the second client node despite the presence of the firewall.

11 (Currently Amended) The network of claim 10 wherein a response that includes the requested file is sent from the second node back to the proxy server, and forwarded from the proxy server to the third client node.

12 (Currently Amended) The network of claim 11 wherein the means for instructing the second client node to establish a connection with the proxy server further includes:

means for allowing the second client node to report its IP address,

means for sending a probe message to the second client node,

means for observing what IP address the second client node is connecting from,

means for comparing the observed IP address with the reported IP address, and

means for determining that the second client node is protected by the firewall when the IP addresses mismatch.

13 (Original) The network of claim 12 wherein the means for instructing the second node to establish a connection with the proxy server further includes:

means for allowing the proxy server to report its IP address,

means for sending a probe message to the proxy server,

means for observing what IP address the proxy server is connecting from,

means for comparing the observed IP address with the reported IP address, and

means for determining that the proxy server is not protected by a firewall when the IP addresses match.

14 (Original) The network of claim 10 further including a node registry for receiving a message from the proxy server to register the second client node using the IP address of the proxy server.

15 (Currently Amended) The network of claim 10 wherein the means for instructing the third node further includes:

means responsive to receiving a search request from the third client node for the file, for returning a result to the third client node, wherein the result identifies a file name, the second client node, and the IP address of the proxy server.

16 (Currently Amended) The network of claim 15 wherein the means for instructing the third client node further includes means for sending a request to the proxy server using the IP address of the proxy server, wherein the request includes a URL for the file on the second client node.

17 (Currently Amended) he network of claim 15 wherein the means for instructing the third client node further includes means for receiving the request by the proxy server, and determining if the request is intended for the proxy server or the second client node by examining the URL in the request.

18 (Currently Amended) The network of claim 15 wherein the means for instructing the third client node further includes means for a in response to determining that

the request is intended for the second client node, reformatting the request so that the second client node may respond to the request.

19 (Currently Amended) A method for facilitating file access in a peer-to-peer network, the peer-to-peer network including at least one server node, and a plurality of client nodes, wherein each of the client nodes allow users to publish and share files over the network, receive files over the network, and search for files to download, wherein at least one of the nodes is protected from the network by a firewall device, the method comprising the steps of:

(a) instructing the firewall-protected client node to transmit a first request to a first client node on the network in order to establish an open connection with the first client node;

(b) instructing other client nodes in the network to send requests for files on the firewall-protected client node to the first client node;

(c) receiving a request on the first client node for a file on the firewall-protected client from a second client node;

(d) passing the request for the file over the open connection to the firewall-protected client node as a response to the first request;

(e) responding to the request for the file by sending a response, which includes the file from the firewall-protected client to the first client node; and

(f) passing the response from the first client node to the second client node, wherein the first client node acts as a proxy between the firewall-protected

node and the second client node to allow the second client node to

access the file on the firewall-protected node.

20 (Currently Amended) The method as in claim 19 further including the step of

waiting to respond to the first request until receiving a request intended for

firewall-protected client node.

21 (Currently Amended) The method as in claim 20 further including the step of:

upon termination of the connection, instructing the firewall-protected client node

to reestablish communication with the first client node.